

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-21. (canceled)

Claim 22. (previously presented) An electronic commerce system, comprising:

a host, configured for operation by a host owner, suitably adapted for two-way communication between the host owner and a plurality of distributors, each of said plurality of distributors offering an inventory of merchandise comprising discrete items; said host suitably adapted to issue orders to the plurality of distributors in response to purchase requests received; and

a store builder suitably adapted to, in response to a request from a store owner, create a store managed by the host for the store owner, said store providing a consumer with access, via said distributors, to at least one merchandise item selected from the inventory.

Claim 23. (previously presented) The electronic commerce system of claim 22, wherein said store is customized by at least one of the following selected by the store owner: top and bottom border design, dominant color, font style, store name, slogan, narrative and URL.

Claims 24-28. (canceled)

Claim 29. (previously presented) The electronic commerce system of claim 22 wherein said store sells at least one merchandise item personalized in a manner directed by the store owner.

Claim 30. (previously presented) The electronic commerce system of claim 29, wherein said host conducts administrative functions related to the sale of said personalized items.

Claim 31. (previously presented) The electronic commerce system of claim 22, wherein said store builder sells private label items distributed by the store owner in addition to the merchandise items available via the plurality of distributors.

Claim 32. (previously presented) The electronic commerce system of claim 31, wherein said host conducts administrative functions related to the sale of said private label items.

Claim 33. (previously presented) The electronic commerce system of claim 23, wherein a single store owner owns multiple stores, each with a different URL.

Claim 34. (previously presented) The electronic commerce system of claim 33, wherein said host maintains the administration of all of said multiple stores owned by said single store owner.

Claim 35. (previously presented) The electronic commerce system of claim 23, wherein said host is not discernable by said consumer.

Claims 36-55. (canceled).

Claim 56. (previously presented) The electronic commerce system of claim 22 wherein the host is further suitably adapted for the host owner to receive payment of a purchase price from the consumer.

Claim 57. (previously presented) The electronic commerce system of claim 56 wherein the host is further suitably adapted to make a payment to at least one of the plurality of distributors from the purchase price, to make a payment to the store owner of a commission, and to retain at least a portion of the purchase price as the host owner's profit.

Claim 58. (canceled)

Claim 59. (new) An electronic commerce system, comprising:

a host, configured for operation by a host owner, suitably adapted for two-way communication between the host owner and a plurality of distributors, each of said plurality of distributors offering an inventory of merchandise comprising discrete items; said host suitably adapted to issue orders to the plurality of distributors in response to purchase requests received;

a store builder suitably adapted to, in response to a request from a store owner, create a store managed by the host for the store owner, said store providing a consumer with access, via said distributors, to at least one merchandise item selected from the inventory; and

wherein:

the store owner is a first store owner and the store is a first store; and

the store builder is further suitably adapted to, in response to a request from a second store owner, create a second store managed by the host for the second store owner, each of the first and second stores to be customized by the respective first and second store owners to offer products for sale by e-commerce.

Claim 60. (new) An electronic commerce system, comprising:

a host, configured for operation by a host owner, suitably adapted for two-way communication between the host owner and a plurality of distributors, each of said plurality of distributors offering an inventory of merchandise comprising discrete items; said host suitably adapted to issue orders to the plurality of distributors in response to purchase requests received;

a store builder suitably adapted to, in response to a request from a store owner, create a store managed by the host for the store owner, said store providing a consumer with access, via said distributors, to at least one merchandise item selected from the inventory; and

wherein the creation of the store comprises:

presenting to the store owner a plurality of store types for selection in building the store;

receiving from the store owner an identification of a plurality of products to be offered in the store; and

associating the store with a new URL for access by the consumer.

Claim 61. (new) An electronic commerce system, comprising:

a host, configured for operation by a host owner, suitably adapted for two-way communication between the host owner and a plurality of distributors, each of said plurality of distributors offering an inventory of merchandise comprising discrete items; said host suitably

adapted to issue orders to the plurality of distributors in response to purchase requests received;

a store builder suitably adapted to, in response to a request from a store owner, create a store managed by the host for the store owner, said store providing a consumer with access, via said distributors, to at least one merchandise item selected from the inventory; and

wherein the host is further suitably adapted so that the operation of the host by the host owner is indiscernible to the consumer.